

# Using WebCT to Teach “Real-World” Writing Sequences

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## Our Core Writing Program's Philosophy

UNM's Core Writing Department's mission is to prepare first-year writers to competently respond to a variety of academic and professional writing situations, so we strive to teach students some basic skills that we feel they can employ in a variety of settings. Our learning outcomes for English 102, the second semester course in first-year writing, are the outlined in the table below:

| <b>Finding Information</b>                           | <b>Evaluating Information</b>                                   | <b>Composing in a rhetorical context</b>                      | <b>Expressing Information and Arguments</b>                                     |
|--|---|---|---|
| Directed reading, interviewing, observing, surveying | Analyze, interpret, summarize info and texts                    | Frame a problem, choose a <i>genre</i> , organize information | Produce a document with correct and appropriate grammar, mechanics, and diction |
| <b>AND</b>   | <b>AND</b>  | <b>AND</b>  | <b>AND</b>  |
| Directed, source-based research                      | Analyze arguments, evaluate sources, assess levels of authority | Construct a compelling argument for a defined audience        | Cite sources accurately, incorporate quoted material                            |

In addition, our first-year writing courses focus on teaching students a skill set that they can transfer to or employ in any writing situation. So, the skills they learn from writing a report (finding, evaluating, composing, expressing) are essentially more important than what they learned in terms of the report's content. For instance, if we ask students to write a report that gathers opinions related to a certain on-campus service, we are more interested in teaching them how to gather the data, sift through it, and prepare it for the reader. Are not the abilities to find credible and appropriate information, evaluate information, frame an issue, present and defend a point of view, compose in a rhetorical context and in a defined genre, and produce clear and clean documents applicable to all writing situations?

### Genre-based Curriculum

In an effort to better prepare our students for their personal and professional goals, three years ago UNM's Core Writing program adopted a genre-based approach to teaching writing. Conversations about the transition began in spring 2006, but the change did not occur until the 2007-2008 academic year. This switch better prepares our students to successfully enter their professional and academic discourse communities as genre-based writing requires them to analyze how communities create and adapt genres to get things done and how the genre is infused with a community's values and expectations, so we

think using a genre-based approach to teaching writing provides students with some tools to invent and navigate their university through “trying on” different genre styles all while learning to consider and appropriately use rhetorical situations and purposes.

## **English 102 Writing Assignments and WebCT**

Because our learning outcomes in first-year writing focus on teaching students strategies they will need in order to respond to various rhetorical situations, each major writing assignment places them in a different role, which requires them to write to different audiences for different purposes in increasingly more difficult genres. To make things interesting for students, we frame the semester as a narrative that places them in three distinct rhetorical situations.

In addition to classroom discussion and collaborative activities, we supplemented each assignment with WebCT discussions, reading and writing assignments, and chats, depending upon whether we were teaching hybrid or face-to-face courses. We used these tools in each writing sequence to different ends. What follows is a detailed description of each writing sequence, explanations of how the WebCT tools were used, and reflections on improving each sequence.

### **Arch of Major Writing Assignments: Rhetorical Situations**

***Sequence One:*** Congratulations! Your stellar work as an intern has landed you a job with Mr. Jon Favreau, the Director of Speechwriting for the President. Your responsibility is to continue to work on ONE of the three speech-writing subcommittees, each of which addresses a topic that has proven important in public opinion and upon which President Obama must make his State of the Union Address in the near future. These three subcommittee topics are as follows: **Islam and the West, healthcare reform, or violent entertainment.**

***Sequence Two:*** Your White House internship has now ended, and you must find a job in the private sector. The first thing you do is hire Ms. Busybody, a Career Counselor. Since you have no idea what you want to do in the private sector, Ms. Busybody wants you to do a little research to figure out who you want to be when you “grow-up.” Ultimately, you are working towards writing a Letter of Intent or Cover Letter geared for a specific corporate job, another internship, or graduate school application.

***Sequence Three:*** After successfully writing your Letter of Intent or Cover Letter, you are moving back to New Mexico, and you want to give back to the local community that helped shape you into the success you have become. You will therefore pick a local issue or problem that you feel you can help solve and write a proposal outlining this solution. Your proposal should somehow be connected to your field of expertise (your major). Ultimately, you should choose a local issue you are passionate about and about which already have some knowledge.

## **Sequence One Documents: Short Writing Assignments and Rubrics, Major Writing Assignment and Rubric, and Instructor Reflection**

### **SWA 1: Summaries of Three Related Articles**

**Final Draft Due:** February 3rd

**Rhetorical Situation:** You are an intern working under Mr. Jon Favreau, the White House Director of Speechwriting. For your first assignment, you will prepare a summary of three articles, chosen from one of three topics listed below, for President Obama's State of the Union Address (All articles are found on WebCT.) Your summary will help Mr. Favreau's speech-writing subcommittees prepare President Obama's State of the Union Address. The subcommittee topics are as follows:

- violent entertainment
- Islam and the West
- health care reform

The format and content of the memo should simulate the following:

MEMORANDUM (type this word at the top of the document in all capital letters)

DATE: (Date Memo is due)

TO: Mr. Jon Favreau, Director of Speechwriting

FROM: (Your First and Last Name) (Initial by hand after your printed name)

SUBJECT: (Subject of the Memo)

**The purpose of the memo:** A **short** statement explaining the memo's purpose.

**Section 1:** Identify the author, title, rhetorical purpose, and intended audience of the first article you have chosen. Then, provide a brief summary of the claim and types of evidence used in this first article by utilizing the Toulmin strategy of reading discussed in class. Remember to omit your opinion.

**Section 2:** Identify the author, title, rhetorical purpose, and intended audience of the second article you have chosen. Then, provide a brief summary of the claim and types of evidence used in this article. Remember to omit your opinion.

**Section 3:** Identify the author, title, rhetorical purpose, and intended audience of the third article you have chosen. Then, provide a brief summary of the claim and types of evidence used in a third article. Remember to omit your opinion.

**Closing sentence:** A brief closing emphasizing the relevance of these articles to Mr. Favreau's project and indicating that if he has questions about the contents of the articles, he may contact you. Include your contact information.

### NOTES ON CONTENT AND FORMAT:

- Do not simply answer the questions in each section; construct coherent paragraphs within each section. Be sure you provide transitional expressions between sections and topic sentences for each paragraph.
- DO NOT write in the body of the Memo “The purpose of the memo,” “Sections 1, 2, 3,” and “Closing Sentence.” Instead, include subheadings that say “[ARTICLE TITLE] Summary” in each section.
- Format the heading like the one at the top of this handout.
- Make sure you initial after your name in the heading.
- Make sure the memo is left aligned (no paragraph indentions).
- Single space the memo but double space between each section.
- Type the document in 12pt, Times New Roman font

### Rubric for an “A” Memo

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective Summary  |
|-----------------|---------------|--|
| 40              |               | <b>Content:</b> The document contains a summary of the articles. Each summary successfully uses the Toulmin model by clearly identifying the claim, reasons, and description of evidence used.   |
| 30              |               | <b>Organization:</b> The summaries are clearly separate and the content of each section is organized in a logical manner. Each section is written in complete paragraphs, and the writer shows relationships within paragraphs and between paragraphs by the use of transitions. The order of the ideas in the summaries follows the order of the ideas in the articles. |
| 20              |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The document is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and uses economical style (doesn’t repeat itself or use unnecessary words).   |
| 10              |               | <b>Format:</b> The memo adheres to memo format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, subheading usage)   |

## English 102 Sequence One: Analytical Report

**Rough Drafts Due:** February 17 & 19

**Final Draft Due:** February 24

**Rhetorical Situation:** Congratulations! Your stellar work as an intern has landed you a job with Mr. Jon Favreau, the Director of Speechwriting for the President. Your particular responsibility is to continue to work on ONE of the three speech-writing subcommittees, each of which addresses a topic that has proven important in public opinion and on which President Obama must make his State of the Union Address in the near future. These three subcommittee topics are as follows:

- Violent Entertainment
- Islam and the West
- Artificial Intelligence

Using the same three articles from one of these subtopics that you worked with as an intern on SWA1 and SWA2 (all are located on WebCT), write a report that analyzes their rhetorical strategies. You must make an evaluation at the end of the report in which you suggest the best rhetorical means of addressing the topic within the President's forthcoming speech. In other words, what should his stance on your chosen issue be when he delivers the speech?

Your report should consist of the following sections:

- **Title Page**—should include the title of the report, your name, the organization or company for which you work, and the date.
- **Introduction**—will prepare readers for the material that follows by introducing the selected articles. It should also include a thesis statement that indicates the overall purpose of the report.
- **Body**—should consist of an analysis of the writers' use of rhetorical strategies, which may include but are not limited to *logos*, *pathos*, *ethos*, claims, reasons, evidence, etc. Be specific with this analysis, but remember not to bite off more than you can chew. Only pick a few rhetorical strategies to analyze within the three articles, as space and Mr. Favreau's time are limited.
- **Conclusion**—should make an evaluation of the best means of addressing the selected topic for the President's audience, the American public. Remember that this does not mean you have to choose one article as being the "best" of the three, but rather you might find that a combination of the means used within the different articles would be most appropriate in addressing the topic.
- **Bibliography**—you must cite all of the articles you use according to the appropriate style. Those writing on "Violent Entertainment" will use MLA, "Islam and the West"; those writing on Islam and the West will use APA; and those writing on health care reform will use CSE. We will review these styles in class.

Your report should be 4-6 full pages (not including title page and bibliography), double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font. Your pages should also be numbered; place the page numbers on the bottom middle of the page.

#### Rubric for an “A” Report

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective Analysis  |
|-----------------|---------------|---|
| 35              |               | <b>Purpose:</b> The overall purpose of the report is articulated in a clear thesis statement that is then supported with relevant details (examples of articles’ rhetorical strategies) within the following sections of the report. Each paragraph has a distinct purpose and relevant supporting information. The conclusion evaluates the effectiveness of these rhetorical strategies and suggests a means of addressing the topic to best meet the needs of the intended audience. |
| 30              |               | <b>Organization:</b> All sections are organized logically and the content within each section is organized in a cohesive manner. Each section is written in complete paragraphs, and the writer shows relationships within paragraphs and between paragraphs by the use of transitions.   |
| 20              |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The report is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and uses economical style (doesn’t repeat itself or use unnecessary words).  |
| 15              |               | <b>Format:</b> The report adheres to appropriate format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, page numbers) as specified in the instructions. All bibliographic information is included, and in-text quotes and paraphrases are appropriately cited.  |

#### Grade Breakdown for Sequence 1

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| SWA1.....   | 15% |
| SWA2.....   | 15% |
| Report..... | 70% |



## WebCT Activities For Analytical Report

### I. Discussion Thread Analyzing Rhetorical Strategies in Assigned Readings

#### *Prompts:*

#### **1. Initial Posting (Due by 11:59pm, Thursday, February 4)**

Read the articles "Parents Need Help," "Bang, You're Dead," "Defending Video Games," "Operant Conditioning," and "Aggression and Violent Media," which are linked to this week's module and are also posted under Readings (located on the Course Content page), Sequence 1, Violent Entertainment. After reading the articles, choose one you'd like to discuss in your initial thread posting, in terms of the following pieces of information:

- *Identify the article you chose,*
- *the genre in which the piece was written,*
- *the author's rhetorical purpose,*
- *what you think the major claim is,*
- *one of the author's reasons,*
- *and one type of evidence used.*

#### **2. Response to Peers (Due by 11:59, Sunday, February 7)**

Read all of your group members' postings and respond to at least two comments. Find two postings: one that addresses an article you did not initially write about, and another one (can be on the same article as your initial post). For your responses, you have some options:

- For at least one response, find a posting that contains answers you disagree with or answers you think need to be elaborated on or qualified. Then, provide reasons why you disagree with chosen posting or why the answer needs to somehow be qualified or elaborated upon. Use examples/information from the articles or your textbook to support your response.
- For the second response, find a posting you either agree with and explain why or ones that perhaps you partially agree with and explain why, providing reasons and evidence noting why you agree or somewhat agree, disagree, etc. Be sure to support your responses with adequate evidence.

## Student Responses to Thread Prompt<sup>1</sup>

### *A Student's Initial Response to prompt:*

"In the interview conducted by Sara Remensnyder called "Bang you're dead", Gerard Jones is questioned on his views of the effect violent comic books, TV shows and movies have on children, and how he feels he affects them. This type of writing is a journalistic interview because of the 'question and answer' style of writing. The purpose of this article was to address a different view of how questionable entertainment affects kids. Jones makes it clear that he thinks that angry characters who partake in violent behavior actually help children through difficult parts of adolescence. The author uses himself as an example and says, '...the character who caught me, and freed me, was the Hulk: overgendered and under socialized, half-naked and half-witted, raging against a frightened world that misunderstood and persecuted him.' This may seem like an unusual response to the violence so many parents protest, but Jones gives good examples and reasons which gave me a different perspective on how to view controversial entertainment.---Kara Arterburn

### *Classmate's Response to Student's Post:*

"Hi Kara!

You did a great job on your answers to the article. I agree with all of your answers and loved your examples of how the author used his own self experience to help his stance on the subject. I thought the interview was very successful and I do not believe I can add on to any of your answers. You did a great job."—Jessica Lujan-Dressler

## II. Discussion Thread Posting Sharing Research on Obama's Politics

**Prompt:** Think about what you know regarding President Obama's political stance on foreign and domestic issues. How does one of the articles covering your topic support or disagree with his politics? To find information on Obama's politics concerning your topic, conduct an internet search (review speeches, check out the Democratic National Convention's website, new sites, etc.). For example, you might Google "Obama and video games," "Obama and Islam," etc. In your post, identify where you found the information (name of website) and why you think this website is a credible source of information. Summarize the information the website provided you concerning Obama's politics on your chosen issue. Then, provide an example (quote/summary) from one of your chosen articles and explain how the passage does/doesn't align with President Obama's politics. Also, do not simply copy what your classmates have posted. Attempt to locate your own information. **This posting is due by Monday, February, 8, 11:59 pm.**

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<sup>1</sup> I obtained written permission to use students' responses to these WebCT exercises.

### ***Students' Responses to Prompt:***

#### **Example 1:**

“The website I'll be referring to is <http://www.mcvuk.com/>. This website is a UK and international video game trade news and community site specializing in entertainment, leisure, and technology markets. To summarize this very short article, while on the campaign trail, Obama is quoted as saying "Government can't do everything", and instructs "[parents to] turn off the television, turn off the video games." These statements are a stark contrast to the ideas of then Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich, as quoted in the article, "Parents Need Help", as Blagojevich says, "Parenting is hard work and the state has a compelling interest in helping parents raise their children to be upstanding men and women." While Rod Blagojevich claims that the government must play a role in how a parent raises their children, it is Obama's belief that, in a very pragmatic sense, the government is not a fix-all institution for parenting, and that the parents are ultimately responsible for raising their children”---Brian White.

#### **Example 2:**

“At [www.examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com) there was an article about Obama's continuous stance on video games. I believe the source is credible because it gave a direct link to the Wall Street Journal post of Obama's speech that addressed his opinion on video games. He has stayed persistent in his stance about video games. He believes they are leading to an unhealthy lifestyle and that we should get "children to step away from the video games and spend more time playing outside." The article was simply stating Obama's view on video games without any opposition or argument.”—Adriana Aguilar

### **III. Online Discussion Prompts Grading Rubric**

I use the rubric shown here to grade your discussion prompt postings each week. For each of the three categories, you receive one score. I then add the score from each category to get the total score for the discussion that week. Up to 10 points are possible per discussion prompt. Please note that discussion prompts are locked at the second deadline: this prevents additional posts for that prompt. I'll jump into discussions now and then with responses and comments, but you don't need to respond to me as a requirement for your discussion prompt grade: this is a function of your comment *and* your responses to your group members' comments. See next page for rubric.

| <b>Your Posting Grade Description</b>   | <b>Point Value</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| – Your comment clearly relates to the main topic, refers to information from class discussions/readings, and includes adequate and relevant supporting details or examples, or might provide new insights about the topic.                              | <b>5</b>           |
| – Your comment clearly relates to the main topic, refers to information from class discussions/readings, and includes some supporting details or examples but might lack sufficient or relevant development.  | <b>4</b>           |
| – Your comment clearly relates to the main topic, refers to information from class discussions/readings, includes some undeveloped substantiation, or simply reiterates what a classmate already said without offering any new insights.                | <b>3</b>           |
| – Your comment clearly relates to the main topic, but no references, details, or examples are given.  | <b>2</b>           |
| – Your comment has little or nothing to do with the main topic or simply restates the main concept. Or your response is difficult to understand because your language is too informal—for example, you overuse abbreviations or include no punctuation. | <b>1</b>           |
| – You do not post a comment to the prompt or you are late with your comment.  | <b>0</b>           |

| <b>Responses to Group Members' Comments Grade Description</b>  | <b>Point Value</b> |
|--|--------------------|
| --You respond to all group members and all your responses encourage and facilitate interaction among all members in order to build an engaging discussion, and you provide adequately developed responses to each member.  | <b>5</b>           |
| – You respond to <i>all</i> group members and all your responses encourage and facilitate interaction among all members in order to build an engaging discussion, and you provide somewhat developed responses to each member, but some of your suggestions/comments may lack development. | <b>4</b>           |
| – You respond to fewer than all group members (but more than one) and provide specific suggestions and comments.   | <b>3</b>           |
| – You respond to only one group member but provide specific suggestions and comments.  | <b>2</b>           |
| – You respond to only one group member and provide only general comments that don't build the discussion. Or your response is difficult to understand because your language is too informal—for example, you overuse abbreviations or include no punctuation.                              | <b>1</b>           |
| – You do not post a single response.   | <b>0</b>           |

## **Mellisa's Reflection on Analytical Report Sequence**

### **I. Justification for Analytical Report Sequence:**

The first half of first-year writing (English 101) at UNM teaches students to use anecdotal evidence, interviews, and surveys to support their ideas. In addition, they primarily write about themselves and their own experiences. English 102 introduces students to library research and asks them to write in academic and professional genres. Moreover, 102 introduces students to rhetorical concepts such as claim, reason, evidence, warrant, rebuttal, concession, objections, qualifications, and appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos in order to argue a point of view and in order to analyze how academic and professional writers employ these strategies. Thus, these tools are taught as reading and writing strategies. In asking students to assume an entry-level position in the workplace and to write in an appropriate workplace genre (a report) to an authority figure (boss) in order to suggest how President Obama should discuss a chosen subtopic, we accomplish several course outcomes and provide a nice base for the remainder of the semester. First, the sequence introduces them to rhetorical concepts they'll use throughout the semester to read and write other pieces: claim, reason, evidence, warrant, etc. Second, this writing sequence places them in a workplace setting and introduces them to academic texts and genres. Last, they are required to suggest how another speaker should discuss a topic, and not focus on what they personally feel about the topic; thus, they must consider Obama's politics and how they think the speech will situate him politically. Their thesis statements and uses of strategies are then based on these considerations. These audience, purpose, and genre considerations are departures from their previous writing assignments that asked for more expressive pieces. I think the assignment puts them in the right frame of mind to respond to the writing assignments that follow, as those that follow are not creative or expressive pieces, but require students to compose professional and academic discourse.

### **II. Reflections on Analytical Report Sequence Materials**

#### **A. Reflections on WebCT Activities**

The discussion thread assignment (see p. 10-11) works really well in getting students to not only practice identifying rhetorical strategies but also to use those terms to analyze a classmate's posting. Kara (student who wrote the initial post example) does an excellent job using the rhetorical terms to analyze the piece. I use students' analyses in the thread postings as a basis for class discussion about the articles. Plus, several of the students use parts of their postings to write their summaries for SWA1. However, I get a range of responses for the second part of the prompt that asks students to read and evaluate how well their classmates identified the strategies in the articles. Notice that the response to Kara's post illustrates how the dialogue can in a way fall flat and become sort of congratulatory. Because Jessica's perspective indicates that Kara's answer was accurate and didn't need further elaboration, Jessica didn't feel compelled to provide a developed response. Thus, I often have to prompt

students to explain why they agree with their classmates by pointing to specific parts of the post or article.

Secondly, the discussion thread that asks students to research what Obama has said in other contexts about their topics helps students in a couple of ways. First, they discover what his politics on the issue have been in the past, and many of them begin their reports with this information. Second, students often find information that conflicts—Obama seems to reflect a different stance depending on the audience. This fact leads to some fruitful class discussion about how politicians use language to position themselves in certain ways for certain settings. However, I have found that even though the thread posting gives students a space to share their research on Obama’s politics, my prompt does not encourage students to dialogue about the research, a facet of the prompt I’m currently revising.

## **B. Reflections on Writing Prompts and Rubrics**

***Short Writing Assignment 1:*** This writing assignment does a nice job teaching students how to use rhetorical strategies (claims, reasons, evidence, warrant, concession, rebuttal, qualification, ethos, pathos, logos) to analyze and summarize a piece of writing. The summaries aid in their apprehension of the complexity of the issues (violent entertainment, Islam and the West, and healthcare reform) and realize who the major stakeholders concerning these issues are. Plus, they begin to learn the memo genre, a genre I use throughout the semester. So, this assignment is a nice foundational piece for the sequence and for the entire semester because it teaches analysis, summary, and memo writing. However, I find that several of the students do not quite grasp what a balanced summary of a piece looks like. Several of their SWA1s include terse summaries, so, we generally have to review summary writing in class using student examples.

***Short Writing Assignment 2:*** Even though this assignment moves students beyond summary and into analysis, I have had to significantly revise SWA2. As the prompt indicates, students are required to pick three rhetorical strategies in any of the articles they read. Although this activity did get them thinking about possible strategies for the report, SWA2 did not transition smoothly to drafting the report. For one, my original iteration of SWA2 asks them to choose three random strategies with really no controlling idea under which these strategies fall. So, when they went to compose the report, they weren’t quite sure how to use the strategies. In my revision of SWA2, I instruct students to suggest what Obama’s stance should be on the issue in the memo’s purpose line then connect the strategies back to the stance in each memo section. This way, they begin with a working thesis of sorts for the report and thereby have a clearer idea where they might be headed in the report.

***Major Writing Assignment Prompt and Rubric:*** A couple of the major problems I saw the first few times I taught the report were students misunderstanding the rhetorical situation and struggling to find an organizational strategy for the report. An

indication that they were not getting the writing situation was reflected in several of their thesis statements. Instead of suggesting how Obama should speak on this topic in his Address, they were simply stating their opinions on the chosen topic. Tweaking SWA2 as mentioned above really clarified this misunderstanding for students. Second, to help students make sense of the report's organization, I revised the part of the prompt that explains what the body should consist of and do. Originally, that dimension of the prompt read:

*“**Body**—should consist of an analysis of the writers’ use of rhetorical strategies, which may include but are not limited to logos, pathos, ethos, claims, reasons, evidence, etc. Be specific with this analysis, but remember not to bite off more than you can chew. Only pick a few rhetorical strategies to analyze within the three articles, as space and Mr. Gerson’s time are limited.”*

Students found the wording and instruction here a bit too abstract and essentially unhelpful. So, I revised this section of the report so that it more closely resembled a workplace report—one that contains sections of description of data and then an analysis of data. This portion of the prompt now reads:

*“**Summary of Key Viewpoints**—This section provides brief summaries of the key viewpoints you’ve researched and plan to discuss in the Suggested Strategies section. It should be opened with an appropriate topic sentence forecasting the section’s content and purpose. In addition, each summary should be preceded by a topic sentence that appropriately frames it and places it in conversation with the other viewpoints summarized (or compares/contrasts it to the other viewpoints summarized).*

***Suggested Strategies**—This section should suggest the most crucial or important strategies gleaned from the articles summarized in the previous section Obama should employ in his speech. Each paragraph should contain a topic sentence that suggests a strategy (claim, reason, evidence, rebuttal, concession, qualification) from one of the articles summarized in the previous section. Then, point to the part of the article that will be useful and follow the example with an explanation of how the strategy will relate to Obama’s overall stance, which you mentioned in the introduction.”*

Students find these instructions much less mystifying. Plus, requiring them to structure the body this way leads to a smoother transition from the SWAs-- SWA1 asks them to summarize articles, which corresponds to what they do in the Summary of Key Viewpoints section, and SWA2 asks them to suggest strategies that support the suggested stance Obama should take on the issue, which corresponds to what they do in the Suggested Strategies section.

Finally, after making the aforementioned revisions to the report prompt, I revised the rubric to give students credit for the report’s new dimensions. See the example below.



| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective Analysis   |
|-----------------|---------------|--|
| 20              |               | <b>Introduction/Conclusion:</b> The introduction prepares Mr. Favreau for the material that follows by including a context for the report and a relevant thesis statement, an overall statement suggesting what Obama's key point about the topic should be. The conclusion reiterates how the proposed strategy will support the suggested stance and appropriately respond to the speech's rhetorical situation.   |
| 20              |               | <b>Summary of articles:</b> This section provides brief summaries of the key viewpoints the writer has researched and discusses in the Suggested Strategies section. It opens with an appropriate topic sentence forecasting the section's content and purpose. In addition, each summary is preceded by a topic sentence that appropriately frames it and places it in conversation with the other viewpoints summarized (or compares/contrasts it to the other viewpoints summarized). |
| 30              |               | <b>Suggested strategies:</b> This section suggests the most important strategies Obama should employ in his speech. Each paragraph contains a topic sentence that suggests a strategy from one of the articles summarized in the previous section, clearly points to a relevant part of one of the articles summarized, and explains how the strategy will relate to Obama's overall stance, with which mentioned in the introduction.   |
| 15              |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The report is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and uses economical style (doesn't repeat itself or use unnecessary words).   |
| 15              |               | <b>Format:</b> The report adheres to appropriate format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, page numbers) as specified in the instructions. All bibliographic information is included, and in-text quotes and paraphrases are appropriately cited.   |

## **Sequence Two Documents: Short Writing Assignments and Rubrics, Major Writing Assignment and Rubric, and Instructor Reflection**

### **SWA 1: Exploring Three Corporate Websites**

**Due:** April 13

**Rhetorical Situation:** With your White House experience and professional development, you are now seeking a position in the private sector (e.g. graduate school, internship, or job). The first thing you do is hire Ms. Pepper Potts, a Career Counselor, to help you with writing a letter of intent. Since you have no idea what you want to do in the private sector, Ms. Potts wants you to complete a little research to figure out “who” you want to be when you “grow-up.”

The first thing she wants you to do is find three corporations, internships, or graduate programs you potentially want to be employed at or apply to. You will then research the websites of these three choices, and you will write a memo to Ms. Potts explaining your choices. Then, you will analyze those choices to identify which corporation or academic institution would be the best fit for you.

The format and content of the memo should simulate the following:

MEMORANDUM (type this word at the top of the document in all capital letters)

DATE: (Date Memo is due)

TO: Ms. Potts

FROM: (Your First and Last Name) (Initial by hand after your printed name)

SUBJECT: (Subject of the Memo)

**The purpose of the memo:** A **short** statement explaining the memo’s purpose and explaining why your career/academic interests fit with the websites you have chosen. For example, if you want to study Medieval Literature, you would choose the top three graduate programs you want to attend and explain why.

**Section 1:** Should contain the following in a paragraph:

- Name of corporation or program.
- Why you chose this website.
- What is the mission statement/statement of purpose of the site?
- How does this website relate to what you ultimately want to do or be involved in? You may want to focus on a specific job description you would pursue, a certain faculty member you would want to work with, or an academic/professional program you are interested in.

**Section 2:** Should contain the following in a paragraph:

- Name of corporation or program.
- Why you chose this website.
- What is the mission statement/statement of purpose of the site?
- How does this website relate to what you ultimately want to do or be involved in?  
You may want to focus on a specific job description you would pursue, a certain faculty member you would want to work with, or an academic/professional program you are interested in.

**Section 3:** Should contain the following in a paragraph:

- Name of the corporation or program.
- Why you chose this website.
- What is the mission statement/statement of purpose of the site?
- How does this website relate to what you ultimately want to do or be involved in?  
You may want to focus on a specific job description you would pursue, a certain faculty member you would want to work with, or an academic/professional program you are interested in.

**Closing sentence:** Include a brief closing explaining what other information you would need to successfully write your Letter of Intent. Indicate to Ms. Potts which corporation or program would be the best fit for you and why. Close with telling Ms. Potts that if she has questions about the contents of the memo, she may contact you. Include your contact information.

#### **NOTES ON CONTENT AND FORMAT:**

- Do not simply answer the questions in each section; construct coherent paragraphs within each section. Be sure you provide transitional expressions within sections and between sections.
- Include topic sentences for each section.
- Do not bullet out your responses.
- DO NOT write in the body of the Memo “The purpose of the memo, “Sections 1, 2, 3,” and “Closing Sentence.”
- Bold subheadings.
- Make sure you initial after your name in the heading.
- Make sure the memo is left aligned (no paragraph indentions).
- Single space the memo and include paragraph spacing.
- Type the document in 12pt, Times New Roman font

Rubric for an “A” Memo

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective summary and response  |
|-----------------|---------------|---|
| 40              |               | <b>Content:</b> Each section answers the bulleted questions in the memo prompt. As well, your memo follows the “notes in the content and format.”   |
| 25              |               | <b>Organization:</b> The evaluations are clearly separate, and the content of each section is organized in a logical manner. Each section is written in complete paragraphs, and the writer shows relationships within paragraphs and between paragraphs by the use of transitions. |
| 20              |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The memo is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and uses economical style (doesn’t repeat itself or use unnecessary words).  |
| 15              |               | <b>Format:</b> The memo adheres to memo format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, subheading usage).   |

**Below is a checklist of items you must submit with SWA 1; submit items in the order listed below and place in a folder.**

*If any required items are missing, 10 points will be deducted for each missing item.*

**TOP of stack**

- \_\_\_ Cover Letter: How you found, evaluated, planned, and communicated information
- \_\_\_ Final draft of SWA 1
- \_\_\_ This piece of paper with items checked

**BOTTOM of stack**

## **SWA 2: Research a Scholarly Journal Article in Your Field**

**Due:** April 22

Now that you've thought about which corporation or academic institution you might want to work for or study at, Ms. Potts wants you to research your future field by finding a scholarly journal article. She strongly believes that this research will help you determine whether or not you would really thrive in such a profession, and the article will help you gain knowledge about your future career.

Using the library research databases or other scholarly journals you are aware of, find a scholarly journal article you find interesting.

The format and content of the memo should simulate the following:

MEMORANDUM (type this word at the top of the document in all capital letters)

DATE: (Date Memo is due)

TO: Ms. Potts

FROM: (Your First and Last Name) (Initial by hand after your printed name)

SUBJECT: (Subject of the Memo)

**The purpose of the memo:** A **short** statement explaining the memo's purpose.

**Section 1:** Identify the article title, author's name, and journal name. Explain who would read this journal. "I don't know" is not a sufficient response.

In 3-4 sentences explain why you chose this article (it was interesting, seemed pertinent to the field, etc.).

**Section 2:** Provide a short summary of the article.

**Section 3:** In a paragraph or two identify what new knowledge you've gained about your field. You may want to explain what you learned that you may like or not like about the field ... or if you've decided to choose a new field altogether.

**Closing sentence:** Include a brief closing emphasizing the relevance of this article to your future goals and your current UNM major/goals. Indicate to Ms. Potts that if she has questions about the contents of the articles, she may contact you. Include your contact information.

## NOTES ON CONTENT AND FORMAT:

- Do not simply answer the questions in each section; construct coherent paragraphs within each section. Be sure you provide transitional expressions within sections and between sections.
- Include topic sentences for each section.
- DO NOT write in the body of the Memo “The purpose of the memo, “Sections 1, 2, 3,” and “Closing Sentence.”
- Create bolded subheadings.
- Make sure you initial after your name in the heading.
- Make sure the memo is left aligned (no paragraph indentions).
- Single space the memo but provide paragraphs.
- Type the document in 12pt, Times New Roman font

### Rubric for an “A” Memo

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective summary and response   |
|-----------------|---------------|--|
| 40              |               | <b>Content:</b> Each section answers the questions in the memo prompt. As well, your memo follows the “notes in the content and format.”   |
| 25              |               | <b>Organization:</b> The sections are clearly separate, and the content of each section is organized in a logical manner. Each section is written in complete paragraphs, and the writer shows relationships within paragraphs and between paragraphs by the use of transitions. |
| 20              |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The memo is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and uses economical style (doesn’t repeat itself or use unnecessary words).   |
| 15              |               | <b>Format:</b> The memo adheres to memo format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, subheading usage).  |

**Below is a checklist of items you must submit with SWA 2; submit items in the order listed below and place in folder.**

***If any required items are missing, 10 points will be deducted for each missing item.***

#### **TOP of stack**

- \_\_\_ Cover Letter: How you found, evaluated, planned, and communicated information
- \_\_\_ Copy of the Article
- \_\_\_ Final draft of SWA 2
- \_\_\_ This piece of paper with items checked

#### **BOTTOM of stack**

## English 102 Sequence Two: Professional Identity

**Length: 1 ½-2 pages, single-spaced**

**Peer Review: April 29**

**Final Draft: May 4**

Finally, Ms. Potts thinks you're prepared to write your Letter of Intent. Using the information you've gathered from your research and memos, write a Letter of Intent to a potential employer or admissions committee for a job, program of study, or internship in your chosen field. The format of your letter should follow business letter conventions. See a Word template for appropriate format.

The contents of your letter should

- Have a **brief** statement of purpose in your opening.
- State why this field interests you.
- Explain why your skills and experiences would make you an ideal candidate for this job or program.
- Show your plan to advance in the field, and the steps you will take to further your training and experience.
- Show your awareness of the company's mission statement, faculty you would like to work with, and/or program(s) you want to be part of.

See the last page for an example of what the UNM English Department wants in a Letter of Intent.

Rubric for an “A” Letter of Intent or Cover Letter

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective summary and response   |
|-----------------|---------------|--|
| 40              |               | <b>Content:</b> a) Has a brief opening statement explaining your purpose. b) The letter details your interest in this job or program and explains why your skills and experiences would make you valuable to this field. c) The letter describes your plan to advance in this field, and the steps you will take to further your training and experience. d) The letter shows your awareness of the mission statement, faculty, or program you would like to work in/with. |
| 25              |               | <b>Organization:</b> The letter has distinct, focused paragraphs. There are transitions within paragraphs and between paragraphs.  |
| 25              |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The letter is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and uses economical style (doesn't repeat itself or use unnecessary words). The letter uses professional vocabulary.  |
| 15              |               | <b>Format:</b> The letter adheres to appropriate business letter format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, subheading usage) we have discussed in class.  |

**Below is a checklist of items you must submit with the Letter of Intent/Cover Letter; submit items in the order listed below and place in a folder.**

*If any required items are missing, 10 points will be deducted for each missing item.*

**TOP of stack**

- \_\_\_ Cover Letter: How you found, evaluated, planned, and communicated information
- \_\_\_ Final draft of Letter
- \_\_\_ Rough draft of Letter
- \_\_\_ Peer Revision Sheet from 4/29 class
- \_\_\_ This piece of paper with items checked

**BOTTOM of stack**



UNM English Department Graduate Studies LETTER/STATEMENT OF INTENT:  
ACADEMIC MASTER'S and Ph.D. PROGRAMS<sup>2</sup>

**What is it?**

- **intellectual autobiography** that conveys the continuum of experiences and events in your academic life which have led you to desire an academic graduate education.
- **What you did** academically, **why** and with **whom**,
- **What you want to do** academically, **where**, **why**, and **with whom**

**Before you write:**

- DO YOUR HOMEWORK
- Get the school's catalogue
- Confirm that the degree program offered matches your career goals
- Review the courses offered by the school that pertain to your goals
- Get the names of specific faculty members with whom you want to study
- Ask your current teachers if they know any of the faculty members in the proposed graduate program.

**How is it organized?**

OPENING PARAGRAPH

- State the program to which you are making application,
- whether you are seeking a master's or doctorate,
- and in a general sense, why you are applying to the program.
- Begin in a direct manner
- Avoid talking about personal, extracurricular or family background.

SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS:

**Your Qualifications and Background**  
**Describe**

- Experiences that have served as a foundation for your future graduate work,
- how your interest in the field developed,
- and how you planned academically for your goal.

Discuss

- undergraduate studies, in general,
- and your major and any specialization within the major, in specific terms.

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<sup>2</sup> This document can be accessed from UNM English Department website at [www.unm.edu/~english](http://www.unm.edu/~english)

Weave into the letter

- Any academic achievements or accomplishments
- specific learning experiences that demonstrate your motivation and inspiration for continued study and/or research.
  - a. independent study courses or research with professors
  - b. teaching assistantships
  - c. undergraduate research conference presentations
  - d. published work
  - e. laboratory experiences
  - f. research internships
  - g. seminar courses
  - h. honors thesis
  - i. relevant education abroad
  - j. independent writing
  - k. academic honors and/or very closely related work experience.

**Discuss in detail:**

- qualifications that relate to your academic goal
- special academic and research experiences.

Explain special projects or research

- indicates ability to explore or master certain skills or particular knowledge about your academic field
- illustrates to the committee that you have
  - a. the initiative and ability to develop ideas
  - b. the capacity to work through problems independently
  - c. the determination to achieve your goals.

Mention special skills

- laboratory techniques
- computer skills
- foreign language proficiency
- advanced quantitative and statistical expertise.

**CLOSING PARAGRAPH: PLANNED ACADEMIC FUTURE**

Explain

- specifically why you wish to attend their particular program.
- specifically how the department's graduate curriculum matches your short and long term academic and career goals.
- show evidence of your investigation of their program, its faculty and their research, and their departmental resources and facilities
- indicate how your academic and intellectual interests form a match with the research interests of one or more faculty in the program or department.

## CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Tell the Graduate Committee

- that you are qualified and motivated
- that you will be successful in graduate study and research

Summarize briefly

- why you believe you possess the experience and skills to be admitted to their program

## STYLE OF LETTER:

- direct and straightforward manner
- **no** contrivances or gimmicks
- place central points early
- use active, not passive voice
- **do not use words** such as rather, quite, somewhat, fairly, pretty much
- Be positive
  - a. emphasize strengths
  - b. explain anomalies
- Be accurate and precise

## EDIT RUTHLESSLY

- CUT OUT redundancy
- Be organized, orderly, specific and concise.
- Use examples where needed
- keep the statement to one or two typed pages.
- Use transitions that tie each paragraph to the next.
- Do not assume that the committee will understand everything.
  - a. Explain course titles and research projects where necessary

*Many thanks to Professor Lynn Beene from the UNM English Department for allowing us to use these guidelines!*

## WebCT Activities For Professional Identity Sequence<sup>3</sup>

**Context:** These responses come from two different sections (a face-to-face and a hybrid class). For the face-to-face class, WebCT discussion threads were used as a place for homework-type questions and freewrites. These postings did not have a rigid rubric or expectations. For the hybrid class, WebCT discussion threads replaced a class meeting, and there were specific guidelines (see III. Online Discussion Rubric).

### I. Discussion Thread Analyzing Rhetorical Strategies in Assigned Readings

#### **Prompt:**

#### **1. Initial Posting: This week you will be critiquing a Cover Letter**

There are two letters to chose from:

- 1) A Cover Letter to work for Northrup Grumman
- 2) A Cover Letter for a Craig's List job Auto Cad Engineer job post.

After picking your Letter of Intent to critique, you will answer these following questions in a numerical format (1, 2, 3, ..):

- 1) Identify the letter writer's rhetorical purpose.
- 2) How does (or doesn't) the letter writer establish his ethos? You will probably address several aspects.
- 3) What is your critique of the rhetorical strategies used?
- 4) Critique the professionalism of the letter.
- 5) What is missing from the body of the letter?
- 6) What piece of advice would you give this letter writer for the future?
- 7) Based on the above information, would you or would you not hire this person and why?

Make sure you use appropriate examples, so you can thoroughly explain what you are talking about.

This post should be at least 400 words.

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<sup>S3</sup> All students granted permission to use their responses anonymously.

## #1 Sample Cover Letter with Accompanying Job Posting Below

March 3, 2009  
101 Mockingbird Dr.  
Cartersville, GA  
Phone (770)387-4994  
xxx@xxx.com

Dear Mr. Ramos,

I am responding to your Craig's List posting regarding the Auto cad driver needed.

To give you a better picture of my experiences, I will take the time to give specific details about my experience and expertise.

First of all, when I was three years old, my father taught me how to hold and read a tape measure to the 1/8 of an inch. Because I am a first born, I believe I am quite meticulous and detailed oriented which is prolly what you need.

Second, I have had a least 2 year of experience with architectural metal applications and engineering plans, as I designed the public pool and water treatment plant in Atlanta. I can give you references if you'd like.

Thirdly, is there any way the job can continue as full time? I have several children, and my wife is unemployed, so I am the only income provider.

I have heard wonderful things about your company, and I believe under your expert guidance and support, I can learn a lot more. It is very important for me to meet and work with a supervisor who is respected in the community, and my friends tell me you are.

The last thing I believe you should know is that I graduated with a 4.0 from the University of Atlanta, Gerogia. I was an honor student all 7 years, and on the deans list. My minor is Spanglish studies, so if you prefer a bilingual employee, I can speak English and Spanglish.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns, I want to dispel them as soon as possible.

Best,

Charles Barkley<sup>4</sup>  
Bark.master@gmail.com

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<sup>4</sup> This is a fictitious letter I wrote.

**#1 Cover Letter Written in Response to Auto cad drafter(needed immediately)  
(Cartersville, GA)<sup>5</sup>**

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Reply to: xxx@xxx.com

Date: 2009-03-03, 1:13PM EST

Must have at least 2 year of experience with architectural metal applications and engineering plans. Proficiency with computers (including auto cad and ms. office) and attention to detail a must. Construction experience is a plus and working w/ field measurements + (must be able to read a tape measure to the 1/8, translate inches to decimals and vice versa). Job will be a full time for about 2 months and after that will be part time.

Apply in person with resume, drawings and 2 forms if ID at 101 Mockingbird Dr.  
Cartersville, GA Phone (770) xxx-4994 or send resume and drawings to  
lramos@xxx.com FOR IMMEDIATE JOB OPENING!!!

**#2 Sample Cover Letter in Response to Online Job Posting at Northrup Grumman's  
Company Website**

March 3, 2009

Northrup Grumman  
1111 In a Land Far, Far Away  
Enterprise, Galaxy 7

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to notify you all that I am interested in the following position: Principle Trainer, Vinnell Arabia. I am highly dedicated to space research and military training. As you can see from my attached resumé, I have been in the field for seventeen years, primarily working under the expertise and guidance of the renowned Geotechnical Engineer Arthur Casagrande.

I believe my experiences as an American will be advantageous to your international employees; I can bring a zenith of experiences and professional development to the metaphorical "table," particularly my love for foreign cultures and persons, and this passion will act as an advocate for your corporate goals.

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<sup>5</sup> This is a real Craig's List job posting.

As your website slogan says, I am very dedicated to “defining the future”; with our partnership, I am confident our aims complement each other. Especially profitable is my management skills in which I am articulate and carry much ardor; these skills will most certainly gain approbation with your international employees. I am confident my application materials truly prove this point beyond question. I have garnered management awards from the Australian Institute of Management, The Office of Human Resources at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the U.S. Department of Energy.

I thank you for your time and consideration, and I most sincerely look to your response.

Dennis Rodman<sup>6</sup>  
1221 Bel-Air  
Beverly Hills, Ca 99999  
(712) 111-1111  
d.rodman@casagrande.com

***A Student’s Response to prompt and Charles Barkley’s Cover Letter:***

1) Mr. Charles Barkley’s rhetorical purpose is too proving to Mr. Ramos that he is the best candidate for the auto cad driver position.

2) Barkley presents ethos when stating that he is the oldest child, which develops management skills. Also, the other facts he presents about himself (i.e. His 4.0 at the University of Atlanta, Georgia, and his background with tape measuring) also establish ethos. I still believe, however, that he actually develops poor ethos which make him sound less professional. In example, He doesn’t mention any previous jobs specifically, and stats that he has “several children,” which can turn a potential employer off because of how much time kids take up. He also miss spells probably (proolly!) which makes him sound dumb. Also, by mentioning that he would want to continue the job as full time is kind of a bold move to make in the letter of intent because he hasn’t gotten the job yet.

3) I think his letter is weak because he copies the ad almost word-for-word. I think people do this to sound like they are a perfect fit for a job, but I think it’s more professional to give specific examples as to why you fit into the category instead of just repeating the ad. Because he copies the ad so closely, he doesn’t seem very genuine about what he’s writing. Also, he doesn’t establish pathos until the end, and says his friends say good things about the company, instead of tying ethos and pathos together.

4) I think there are many reasons this letter isn’t very professional. First off, he starts off the letter very weird. He uses too sentences and two separate paragraphs as an

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<sup>6</sup> This is a fictitious letter I wrote. The cover letter responds to several online job postings at Northrup Grumman.

introduction, and is very blunt, “I am responding to your ad on Craig’s List.” When I recently applied for a job, I first introduced myself and my major, and talked about “coming across your ad in the daily lobo,” and then went into explain why I was good for the job (it was very professional!). He also misspells which is a big NO-NO! By mentioning that he wanted to dispel any concerns makes it sound like there is going to be concerns even before an interview! I think all these little errors really made his letter seem less professional then it should have been.

5) He doesn’t include and specific previous work or references.

6) He gives too much information (i.e. talking about his kids and wanting to work full time) and breaks up his paragraphs too rapidly. Also, a minor in spanglish? That sounds ridiculous and it took him 7 years to finish college. All these problems make him seem like a less qualified candidate for the job.

7) I would offer him an interview, but any small problems in the interview would be the cherry on top for not hiring him. Sorry Charlie!

## **II. Discussion Thread Completing Reverse Outline and Responding to My Letter of Intent to UNM’s English Department Doctoral Program**

### ***Prompt:***

#### **1. Initial Posting: A Reverse Outline**

Using my Letter of Intent as a guide, first complete a reverse outline. A RO looks at each paragraph and briefly explains (in a few words) what each paragraph is about to determine if organization or content is flawed.

Paragraph 1 is about

Paragraph 2 is about

Paragraph 3 is about

Paragraph 4 is about

Paragraph 5 is about

Paragraph 6 is about

Paragraph 7 is about

Paragraph 8 is about

Then, answer the following questions:

1) In what ways did I show the UNM graduate committee that I did my research about their program?

2) How is my restaurant management experience applicable?



- 3) How do I attempt to prove that I would be an asset to the English department?
- 4) Do you believe the letter is organized in the BEST way? Explain why you would say yes or no.
- 5) How do I present myself through my tone and vocabulary? Is it, in your opinion, appropriate for this letter?

***A (Hybrid) Student's Response to prompt:***

Paragraph one introduces your purpose to the reader.

Paragraph two gives the reader some brief educational and professional background information, in order to develop reasons as to why you are qualified for the program.

Paragraph three starts to develop your ethos as a professional, explaining the subject matters you were interested in throughout grad school and professors whom introduced you to new ideas.

Paragraph four explains your commitment to composition theory and how you have applied your desire to help undergraduates.

Paragraph five explains your professional development, a specific example of you applying your knowledge and aspirations into a program to help others.

Paragraph six lists your resume of presentations.

Paragraph seven explains your teaching history and specific interests, including your interest in helping first year college students improve their writing.

Paragraph eight simply states your intent, and the specifics as to why you intend this (to go to UNM's doctoral program).

Paragraph nine sums up the letter, stating that you believe you should be accepted into the program.

1) As you begin your letter, you specifically mention programs that UNM offers, instead of broad categories as to what you'd like to study. Also, you mention professor's names at the end of your letter, introducing and concluding your letter with bold evidence of background research.

2) Your restaurant experience is probably your most established work history, and it is always important to include a strong professional background and your ability to balance school and work. Also, by stating your duties and the fact that you were a manager, you have shown that you will work your way to the top and manage once you get there.

3) By mentioning the program that you created with another grad student, you have shown your dedication to this subject and your knowledge in this field. Also, you mention programs you have been involved with and how you have contemplated and reflected on them.

4) I believe the paragraphs and letter is very well organized, because each paragraph flows together (you explain at the beginning why or how it relates to the last paragraph) and your enthusiasm or strong assets to the program are mentioned in each paragraph.

5) Your tone is very confident, which I believe is always important in a letter of intent, because if you don't sound confident as to why you should be accepted, why should they (whoever "they" exactly are) feel confident in accepting you. Also, your vocabulary is good; each paragraph (although the content is different) has the same purpose and goal, and you do not sound repetitive.

### **III. Discussion Thread: Creating Interview Questions for Five Potential Interviewees**

#### ***Prompt:***

#### **1. Initial Posting: Creating Interview Questions**

Thinking about your five potential interviewees, and the *Guide to Writing* readings about interviewing, construct five different, distinct questions you would ask to each person. There should be 25 questions total below.

You should avoid creating yes/no questions like "Do you like your job?"

Clearly identify for whom the questions are for in your post. You may want to use HTML or numbering.

#### ***A (Face-to-Face) Student's Response to prompt:***

To Tyler-

How did you come by this job?

What are some personality traits needed to be a cop?

How Often do you do work related stuff when your off the clock?

What are some of the things you love about your job?

How physically strenuous is this job?

To Phil-

Are there things about this job you dont like?

How does this job effect your family?

What are some of the sacrifices you have made to be a cop?

What are some exciting things about being a cop?  
Are there things that make this job stressful?

To Matt-

What was the police academy like?  
When did you know that you wanted to become a cop?  
What made you decide to become a cop?  
Do you feel like this job has rewarded you?  
What gives you motivation to get every morning and protect the community?

To Ashley-

As a Woman cop do people treat you differently?  
Do you believe this job is harder for woman?  
What do you want to achieve by becoming a cop?  
Do you see yourself as a role model for the community?  
What kind of benefits do cops receive?

To Schuyler-

is there anything you can recommend to me about becoming a cop?  
Does the Community treat you with respect?  
Do you believe that becoming a cop has changed your life?  
is there more about being a cop then just fighting the bad guys?  
What are some of the things you enjoy about being a cop?

#### **IV. Discussion Thread Creating Appropriate Emails to Various Audiences**

***Prompt:***

##### **1. Responding to Reading and Creating Appropriate Emails**

###### **PART ONE**

Read the "Email Etiquette" pdf and answer these questions:

- a) Define CC and BCC.
- b) Why might you need to CC and/or BCC an email?
- c) How do you avoid a "career-limiting move" via email?
- d) Pick 2-3 "email netiquette" that you will observe when you send emails to your interviewees.

###### **PART TWO**

- a) List the names of five people you might consider interviewing.
- b) Consider our conversation about email etiquette, and construct, below, five emails each formatted differently depending on how close of a relationship you have with the person. If you are going to email three professors, you might send similar emails. If you

are going to write to a family member (interviewee #4) and a high school instructor (#5), you will certainly construct your emails differently. Think about these things.

- \*Include your Subject Line
- \*Include your salutation
- \*Include your email body
- \*Include your closing

*A (Face-to-Face) Student's Response to prompt:*

### **Part One**

A) CC is the line in the Email that allows people to see who all you sent your messages too. The bcc allows you to send to multiple people without them all knowing.

B) CC and BCC might are useful tools to everyone. CC might be good for a teacher contacting all her students with general information. BCC might be useful for business people. It seems more personalized and you might need individual responses for a multitude of topics.

c)"career-limiting move" is knowing who you are addressing and what type of information you put into your emails. and how to address your recipient.

d) I will get directly to the point as well as not use humor and sound serious.

### **Part Two**

A)

Tyler (Best Friend and a cop)

Phil (Friend, Used to a cop, older)

Matt (Currently a cop I dont know to well)

Ashley (Good friend and a cop)

Schuyler (Good friend and a cop )

1) Email Subject Line: Cops

Hey buddy,

Its "Eric," I was wondering if we could get together soon so i could ask you some questions about being a cop. Let me know when you are free. Thanks man.

-“Eric”

2) Email Subject Line: Interested in field of profession

Dear Phil,

This is "Eric" and I was wondering if I could take a moment of your time to talk about your career with the police service as i am considering this for my career as well. I Would greatly appreciate any time you spare. Thanks, talk with you soon.

sincerely, "Eric Smith"

3) Email Subject Line: Interested in Police force, need some information

Dear, Matt

We Meet awhile ago at the balloon Fiesta, You were working with my best friend Tyler Carmen. My name is "Eric Smith" and I was wondering if you could spare some time out of your busy schedule so i could ask you come questions about the police force. Any information would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, "Eric Smith"

4) Email Subject Line: Cops

Hey Ashley,

Its "Eric," I was wondering if we could get together sometime to discuss the police force. Whenever you have some free time we could talk about it over coffee. Thanks, talk with ya soon.

-"Eric"

5) Cop Information

Hey Schuyler, Its "Eric." I was wondering if you would be able to take some time outta of your busy schedule to talk about the police force. I think you could provide me with great input, as Iam wanting to become a cop. Any of your time would be greatly appreciated. Thanks Bud.

-"Eric"

## V. Online Discussion Rubric

I did not create a rubric for online discussion in my face-to-face course as my goal for the discussion board was just to get students writing. I used the discussion threads as a type of “freewrite” for students to write down their thoughts. Typically I graded students based on “completed” versus “not completed”; however, in hindsight I recognize that if I desired more sophisticated responses, a rubric would have given students clearer expectations.

There were specific guidelines delineated for the hybrid course, but there was not a grading rubric included. The guidelines were posted on WebCT and were as follows:

### WebCT Discussions

This class is your opportunity to practice informal and formal writing. You will do formal writing in assignments, and you will do informal writing by posting discussion responses. Participating in discussions shows you are attending and participating in this online class. If you do not participate in discussions regularly, you will be dropped from the class. In a hybrid class, each missed WebCT response is like an absence in a regular class. After the **fourth missed response**, I have the option of dropping you from the course since this would be similar to missing more than two-weeks of class.

### FAQs about our Hybrid Discussion Component:

1. *How many prompts will there be each week?* There will be one discussion prompt each week that will take the place of a Thursday class. You are required to post a response to my prompt and one or more responses to the postings of other students in your discussion group to develop a conversation on topics presented in class.
2. *When are discussion postings due each week?* Your first response to the online discussion prompt is due by 11:59pm Friday and your additional responses (and any other homework postings) to your classmates are due by 11:59pm Sunday.
3. *How much are discussion responses worth.* As Discussions replace a Thursday class time and in-class work, they are not worth any points. However, any WebCT homework will be worth a total of 120 points.
4. *Do I have to submit a response to every prompt?* To get the most out of the course and to receive credit, you should respond to every prompt.
5. *What happens if I don't submit a response in time?* If you do not submit in time, you are given an absence. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, I will be flexible. You must give me 24 hours of advanced notice.
6. *What are we going to do with the discussion material?* Each week I plan to use the WebCT discussion questions as in-class discussion material on Tuesdays. Generally, you will often be asked to report on your group's discussion. I also might ask you to come prepared with a question related to that week's readings for the class to answer. My purpose is for our face-to-face and hybrid time to have a relationship--they are not separate entities.

7. *How long should my discussion response be?* Ideally, you will write 250 words total each week. However, I don't count words. I look to see if you have given some serious thought to the prompt and have fully answered it. However, if your response is hurried and short, and doesn't relate to the prompt, you will not be given credit. But it is better to post something than nothing at all.

## **Genesea's Reflection on Professional Identity Sequence**

### **I. Justification for Sequence:**

In line with the department's genre-based curriculum goals, this sequence gets students thinking about their professional and/or academic goals. Because UNM does not require entering students to immediately declare their majors, I felt it was important for my students to begin thinking about why they are in college and what their future goals are. I believe requiring students to start thinking about and researching their academic and professional plans within their first year at UNM will give them insight into their academic and professional interests.

### **II. Reflections on Sequence Materials**

#### **A. Reflections on WebCT Activities**

The missing piece to the discussion threads is the interaction between students. None of the prompts ask students to respond to each other; instead, they are used for brainstorming, analyzing, and freewriting. At this point I'm not sure how to get students to interact with this particular sequence. I do think WebCT has been a good place for students to complete "homework" type assignments, but developing interactive discussion threads has been problematic.

The other thing to consider is implementing a rubric. Since this class met face-to-face, I treated WebCT as a place to post homework assignments instead of asking students to engage with each other. If were a hybrid or online course, WebCT would have to be used as a place to foster the discussion that would normally occur in the classroom.

#### **B. Reflections on Writing Prompts and Rubrics**

I've found that my students really enjoy this sequence as it seems the most pertinent and practical to their interests. As well, they have communicated to me that they feel it really benefits them as they are required to start thinking about their future fields. Yes, some students complain that it is "too early" to ask them to start thinking about graduate school and jobs; however, once they start researching programs, internships, and jobs, along with interviewing professionals in their perspective fields, they feel better equipped to move forward. And, in many cases, students discover they do not want to work in the field they researched.

As much as I want them to develop the skills of writing a letter of intent or a cover letter, I also want them to really think about their professional and academic interests. We all know that figuring out who we “want to be when we grow up” is a long and (often) difficult road; however, I find that getting students to start researching and investigating their fields of interest requires them to really think about who they want to be—crucial reflection and self-assessment that is not always encouraged or facilitated the first year in college.

In terms of creating rubrics for discussion threads, I see the value for having one for hybrid classes, though I am not sure of my feelings for a face-to-face class. In one sense, I prefer grading on a “completed” versus “not completed” scale; however, I do see the benefits for a rubric. I suppose these choices come down to the rhetorical purpose of these assignments.



## **Sequence Three Documents: Short Writing Assignments and Rubrics, Major Writing Assignment and Rubric, and Instructor Reflection**

### **SWA 1: Idea for Proposal**

**Rhetorical Situation:** For this assignment, write a memo addressed to me outlining your proposal problem/question/issue, the projected rhetorical situation for your proposal, and your intended research method. This exercise should be a way for you to help define and narrow your own thoughts and ideas for the proposal. Remember as good researchers that your ideas and focus might and likely will change as you continue your project; nothing is set in stone.

Your memo should simulate the following:

MEMORANDUM (type this word at the top of the document in all capital letters)

DATE: (Date Memo is due)

TO: Ms. Shely, English Department

FROM: (Your First and Last Name) (Initial by hand after your printed name)

SUBJECT: (Subject of the Memo)

**The purpose of the memo:** A **short** statement explaining the memo's purpose and the problem you will examine.

#### **Proposed Problem:**

Outline what problem you intend to solve or idea you intend to propose in your proposal. Why hasn't this problem been solved before? For whom is the problem a problem? How does this problem relate to your future career?/Why did you choose to explore this problem?

#### **Rhetorical Situation:**

Outline the rhetorical situation for the proposal. What role will you assume in this rhetorical situation? What's prompting you to write this proposal? What will your rhetorical purpose be? What entity/who has the power to solve your proposed problem?

#### **Research Method(s):**

Outline how you intend to find the solution to this problem. In a coherent, organized paragraph or two, explain your research method(s):

- Do you plan to conduct interviews or surveys? If yes, with whom and why? (Not all of your topics require this type of research.)

- What library sources might you use? In what areas of the library are you likely to find material on your topic? Specify the databases that you are going to use, books you might checkout, or scholarly or popular periodicals you might consult.
- Do you plan to conduct internet research? Identify some websites you might find helpful.

**Closing section:** This section should be forward-looking. What activities do you plan to engage in during this sequence that will allow you to accomplish your goal? What other assignments do you plan to complete in order to finish the proposal? Which week do we plan to conference about your proposal?

#### NOTES ON CONTENT AND FORMAT:

- Do not simply answer the questions in each section; construct coherent paragraphs within each section. Be sure you provide topic sentences and transitional expressions within sections and between sections.
- DO NOT use subheadings for “The purpose of the memo” or “Closing Sentence,” since these sections do not require subheadings, as it is obvious to the audience what they are.
- Bold your subheadings for the body sections of the memo. These subheadings should effectively reflect the content of each section .
- Format the heading like the one at the top of this handout.
- Make sure you initial after your name in the heading.
- Make sure the memo is left aligned (no paragraph indentions).
- Single space the memo but double space between each section.
- Type the document in 12pt, Times New Roman font.

#### Rubric for an “A” Memo

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective Proposal Memo  |
|-----------------|---------------|--|
| 10              |               | <b>Content:</b> Each section (heading, purpose line, body sections, and closing) contains the content outlined in the SWA1 handout.  |
| 8               |               | <b>Organization:</b> The content of each section is broken into appropriate paragraphs. Each paragraph contains a topic sentence and logical organizational strategy, and the writer shows relationships within paragraphs and between paragraphs by the use of transitions. |
| 7               |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The memo is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, uses economical style (doesn't repeat itself or use unnecessary words), emphatic sentences, and avoids using 2 <sup>nd</sup> person (you) improperly.                     |
| 5               |               | <b>Format:</b> The memo adheres to memo format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, subheading usage).  |

## SWA 2: Annotated Bibliography

### What is an “Annotated Bibliography”?

As researchers collect information, they compile lists of relevant sources and make notes about said sources in order to evaluate and remember their content and often to share this information with other interested researchers. Each entry in your Annotated Bibliography should contain the following:

- Complete bibliographic citation
- A brief annotation, which includes
  - The thesis or main idea of the source
  - A concise summary of the source
  - Any limitations of the source
  - The reliability of the source
  - How the information will relate to your thesis or hypothesis.

**Rhetorical Situation for SWA2:** For SWA2, write an annotated bibliography containing **six** sources related to your proposal topic. Your purpose in the assignment is to not only record and evaluate your sources but also to inform other researchers interested in the same topic who are unaware of the information you’ve located. These sources should be a mixture of library and internet sources. Additionally, they should be credible (newspapers, scholarly journals, etc.) and somehow offer background or supportive information in the proposal. **You are required to use at least one book and one scholarly journal article.** Remember, if you annotate a substantial source such as a website or a book, you need to provide an overview of the source’s contents, but your summary can be limited to the part or parts relevant to your project. However, you must clarify within the annotation that you are only using that specific information and thus it may not reflect the entire contents of the source.

*Note:* It is fine if you end up using some different sources in the actual proposal; good researchers often find more relevant sources as their ideas change. This assignment serves to get you searching and evaluating relevant sources.

### Format for Annotated Bibliography

- You should have a 1-inch margin on top, bottom, and sides of this document.
- Write the following heading at the top left hand corner of the first page:  
Your Name

English 102  
Instructor’s Name  
Date

The title should be double-spaced after the heading and centered; it should effectively demonstrate your chosen topic to the audience. Hit enter and begin your first annotation.

- Organize the citations alphabetically by authors', editors', or website sponsor's last names.
- Document sources according to the style most relevant to your field (MLA, APA, or CSE).

#### Rubric for an "A" Annotated Bibliography

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an effective Annotated Bibliography   |
|-----------------|---------------|--|
| 25              |               | <b>Content:</b> Each annotation includes the thesis or main idea of the source, a concise summary of the source, any limitations of the source, the reliability of the source, and how the information will relate to your thesis or hypothesis. The writer uses a variety of sources, including one book and one journal article. |
| 15              |               | <b>Organization:</b> The annotations are clearly separate and alphabetized, and the content within is organized according to the SWA2 directions.  |
| 5               |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The anbib is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and uses economical style (doesn't repeat itself or use unnecessary words).  |
| 5               |               | <b>Format:</b> The document adheres to the format mentioned in the SWA2 prompt (heading, spacing, font, page layout, and bibliographic style).   |

## English 102 Sequence Two: Local Issue Proposal

**Rhetorical Situation:** After a successful stint as an intern at the White House, you are ready to continue building experience in your field, so you have moved back to New Mexico to work in the local government sector most related to your field. You will therefore pick a local issue or problem that you feel you can help solve and write a 6-8 page proposal outlining the solution. Your proposal should somehow be connected to your field of expertise (your major). For example, if you are a photography major, you may want to look at how Native Americans have been presented through photography and the problems associated with this portrayal. If you are planning on going to med school, you may want look at a local health care crisis.

Your proposal sequence packet will include:

- **Cover memo explaining rhetorical situation:** Outline the rhetorical situation for the proposal. What role will you assume in this rhetorical situation? What's prompting you to write this proposal? What will your rhetorical purpose be? What entity/who has the power to solve your proposed problem? This should not be simply a repeat of your SWA 1. Address your intended audience and let this person/persons know what the proposal contains.

### **The Proposal**

- **Title Page:** Interesting, intriguing title, your name, your affiliation (who you're working for), and date.
- **Introduction:** In the introduction you should provide a brief explanation of what the proposal is about. Tell the audience what problem you intend to solve. (writer's intent)
- **Problem:** In this section you should describe the current situation with regard to the local problem connected to your field or area of interest. What research has already been done? Outline what problem you intend to solve or idea you intend to propose in your proposal. You might want to address some of the following questions in this section: Why hasn't this problem been solved before? For whom is the problem an issue? How does this problem relate to your future career?/Why did you choose to explore this problem? You will also provide a brief literature review of sources that pertain to the issue. Tell what important needs the proposed project will meet and how it will improve the current situation within the field. You will tailor this section to your intended audience by giving an appropriate review of information, which will thereby help you to focus the remainder of the proposal on what your audience needs to know about your project.
- **Solution:** In this section you should describe what form your proposed solution will take and consequences if not taken. This section should include separate paragraphs with specific, argumentative topic sentences. Reiterate that your solution has the features that your intended audience will see as successful. Make sure you include appropriate sources, reasons, and evidence as necessary.

- **Methods:** In this section you will explain exactly how you will solve your problem. You will include specific solutions (“I propose that Cibola High School remove funding from band camp to help out with ...” or “I propose that Albuquerque raise property taxes to pay for...”).
- **Justifications:** Here you persuade your audience that your proposal should be enacted. Typically this section specifies why your solution is better than another; and you should address and then refute the opposing point of view.
- **Conclusion:** Reemphasize the importance to solving this problem and explain what it means for the future of Albuquerque or New Mexico.
- **Bibliography:** Your proposal should contain a full list of bibliographic citations of any sources you use. The style of these citations will depend on the field in which you are working. Refer to <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/> for help.

Ultimately, you should choose a local issue you are passionate about and already have some knowledge about. You may want to focus on a local issue that is closely tied to your major or future profession.

You may not choose large, global issues like abortion, politics, marijuana, etc. If you are concerned that your local issue may bleed into a global issue, check with me first.

**Examples of proposal ideas:** grant proposal for opening a business, grant proposal for testing a new drug on a certain population in NM, proposal for improving a product or service, proposal for a new art installation somewhere, funding for sporting equipment at an Albuquerque high school, free cancer screening in the South Valley, nutrition classes at a Senior Center, etc.

#### Rubric for an “A” Proposal

| Points Possible | Points Earned | Qualities of an Effective Proposal   |
|-----------------|---------------|--|
| 45              |               | <b>Content:</b> Each section contains the content outlined in the proposal prompt. Each section has clear headings. If images are used, they are appropriate to the content and do not waste page space.   |
| 30              |               | <b>Organization:</b> The content of each section is broken into appropriate paragraphs. Each paragraph contains a topic sentence and logical organizational strategy, and the writer shows relationships within paragraphs and between paragraphs by the use of transitions. |
| 15              |               | <b>Surface Features:</b> The proposal is free of distracting errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, uses economical style (doesn’t repeat itself or use unnecessary words), emphatic sentences, and avoids using 2 <sup>nd</sup> person (you) improperly.                 |
| 10              |               | <b>Format:</b> The proposal adheres to proposal format (heading, spacing, font, page layout, subheading usage, and bibliographic style).   |

## WebCT Activities For Local Issue Proposal<sup>7</sup>

### I. Discussion Thread

#### *Prompt:*

**1. Initial Posting:** Identify and make a detailed list (5+ items) of characteristics of your intended audience. Then, describe specifically how you intend to cater your proposal to this audience. For example, if your audience is a member of the state legislature, you might describe her/him as knowledgeable about the legislative process (or so we hope!) and thus in your proposal you will not need to explain to him all of the steps it will take to get the bill to pass. Or, if your audience is educated, you will want to avoid grammatical and/or mechanical errors and slang in your proposal so s/he will not think you aren't taking the proposal seriously.

This assignment was a journal assignment in which only each individual student and I were able to read his/her entry. I provided commentary on the student's entry, and all who attempted the assignment earned 20 points for participation.

#### *Student #1 Response to prompt:*

My intended audience is the Albuquerque Public School Board. I believe my audience is aware of how to make students academically successful, should know that not all students do not want to participate in physical education, there are also students that only want to take part in physical education classes. They should also be well educated and therefore I will want to present my ideas in a clear and concise manner without errors. The Albuquerque Public School Board should also recognize that students can take physical education for non professionals at UNM and should change the credit received for that class to a physical education credit and not an elective credit.

#### *Student #2 Response to prompt:*

The intended audience for my proposal to create a union for the food service industry tends to have the following characteristics: They are young, uneducated about worker rights, low-income, are unhappy with the work environment, and typically the highest level of education is a high school degree. In order to cater my proposal to this audience I need to state how I am young and familiar with the workings of a restaurant in order to gain the trust of my audience. I will also need to provide information on the rights of employees and indicate examples of how these rights have been violated. I will also address the possibility of higher wages and benefits to appeal to the low-income aspect of

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<sup>S7</sup> All students granted permission to use their responses anonymously.

my audience. I will need to keep my proposal in layman's terms since the majority of my audience will only have a high school degree but I will be able to use restaurant slang that my audience is familiar with.

## **II. Web-Conferencing via WebCT Chat**

During the week in which our class workshopped proposals in class, I made myself available in the WebCT chatroom on two nights for one hour each. Students were encouraged to chat with me and ask questions about their proposals, send me parts of their proposals for feedback, or get citation or grammatical/mechanical help.

**Chat results:** very few students, only two or three, participated in the chat sessions. Their questions were confined mostly to local issues of grammar, mechanics, and citation. When I asked the classes as a whole about the lack of participation, many said they had forgotten about the chat option, or simply that they didn't feel they needed any help.

## **Calinda's Reflection on Local Issue Proposal Sequence**

### **I. Justifications for Proposal Sequence**

The Core Writing program at UNM has designed English 102 to initiate students into academic research in preparation for writing within their individual fields. This proposal sequence does just that. The students first decide upon a local problem they'd like to solve and then create a rhetorical situation for their proposal. They accomplish the necessary outcomes in the following manner.

- Students must find information by using secondary research; they utilize the library's resources and search in academic databases to find peer-reviewed journal articles, in local newspaper collections, in encyclopedias specific to their fields, and in the library's scholarly book collections. Many students also choose to conduct primary research in the form of interviews and surveys.
- Students evaluate the sources they have found for their usefulness and applicability to the rhetorical situation they have chosen.
- Students plan how they will incorporate the sources they have chosen into their writing, and, based on the secondary information they have decided to include, they will plan how to structure their proposals in a manner that will best reach their intended audiences.
- Students present and communicate their information according to their planning. They consider what voice to use in addressing their audiences, how to preserve their own ethos as a writer and researcher, and what displays of data or other



information will most effectively convey their proposed arguments and convince their intended audiences.

## **I. Reflections on Proposal Sequence Activities**

### **A. WebCT Activities**

**Audience analysis:** The audience analysis activity worked well as a journal exercise. I like the listing of audience characteristics in that it requires the students to carefully consider to whom they are writing and how they will tailor their proposals to the needs of this audience. In addition, the students have this journal entry and my comments saved electronically, which means they can come back and review them before they actually write their proposals. The drawback with this assignment, as the student comments demonstrate, is that it seems difficult for students to answer with a great deal of specificity, possibly because they have not yet begun actually writing their proposals. I might move this assignment to a time a little later in the sequence, after they have completed their annotated bibliographies and have a clearer idea of what exactly they are going to say in their proposals.

**Web-conferences:** My goal in organizing these web-conferences was to encourage students to ask questions outside of class but without requiring them to conference with me face-to-face. Many students simply aren't comfortable asking questions in or outside of class because they lack confidence in their abilities as writers and students. I thought the medium of WebCT chat would help students to approach me more comfortably. However, the lack of participation I saw with this exercise led me to believe that my assumption was inaccurate. Students reported that they either forgot about the conferencing opportunities or simply did not have questions for me. The dismal failure of this WebCT activity caused me to abandon any future attempts at web-conferencing and instead have only face-to-face conferences, which have shown much greater success.

### **B. Reflections on Writing Prompts and Rubrics**

**Short writing assignment 1:** This writing assignment helps students to get a feel for their intended projects. They plan their rhetorical situations and research methods, as well as give a tentative plan for their work progress. This assignment has the advantage of being due early in the sequence, so I can give the students feedback on their ideas and help them to make adjustments before they have even begun the actual proposal.

I have modified the assignment since the first time I taught it. Initially I required the students to submit a research calendar in which they detailed their plans for the stages of writing the proposal. However, I decided the calendar was not a useful tool after consulting with these students, who had little idea in the early stages of the proposal planning process exactly what they would do, as they are still learning the research process. I have revised the prompt so that students make a much more general plan for their research process.

***Short writing assignment 2:*** This assignment is extremely helpful for students in that it requires them to take careful notes during their research so that they can summarize the sources, consider their limitations and/or strengths, and decide and articulate how these sources will relate their working theses. They are also required to complete citations of these sources, which will aid them in creating bibliographies for their proposals.

Initially I allowed students to choose any sources they found helpful for this project, but I saw a great lack of variety in their choices, as well as a frequent disregard of academic sources, so I have required them to use at least one book and one journal article this semester. Often students who don't think they are writing on a topic that would have scholarly books and articles simply are not thinking critically as researchers, which then allows me to personally help them in their research processes. Guided research from me and from librarians in this assignment seems to really help students develop the research skills they need to write successful proposals.

***Major Writing Assignment:*** This assignment continually gives me struggles with regard to wording and explanation. I want to give clear, appropriate information to students so that they will be able to complete the assignment with little additional explanation from me, but I also do not want them to feel as though they have no room for creativity and innovative thinking. I compromised by giving distinct explanations of each section, but instead of specifically stating what each section should include, I give examples of what they *might* include so that students who are less sure of themselves will have examples to work from, and those students who tend to take more initiative will have greater freedom to explore in writing their proposals. I have also eliminated the term "literature review" from my proposal prompt; many of the students simply could not divorce their connotative definitions of "literature" with the meaning appropriate to this writing situation.